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## FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

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### *A Modern Training School for Nurses in Jerusalem*

BY ALICE L. SELIGSBURG

Travelers returning from the Holy Land, in telling us of what they have seen, are no longer limited to descriptions of the more or less picturesque decay of ancient glories, to oddities of travel in the Orient, to peculiar types of Moslem, Jew, and Christian, to quaint customs and costumes. Today, one sojourning or working in Palestine sees not only much that is reminiscent of the past, or characteristic of the East; but also much that is modern and Western and that points to a renaissance of the land, and a development that may make it the interpreter of East to West, and West to East. The local Advisory Council which the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, calls into frequent conference, discusses roads, railways, harbors, systems of law, sanitation, education, etc.

In the year 1912, a small group of Jewish women in New York who were specially interested in Palestine, organized under the name Hadassah (Hadassah is the Hebrew name of Queen Esther) into a society that now numbers more than 13,000 members, distributed among one hundred and twelve Chapters in as many different cities. They took as their motto "The Healing of the Daughter of my People." (Jeremiah 8:22). Their objects were two fold:—in America, to foster Zionist ideals; in Palestine, to establish a system of medical social service. They began actual work in the East by sending two American trained nurses to Jerusalem early in 1913, who devoted themselves chiefly to maternity work (organization and supervision of midwives), to a campaign against trachoma among school-children, to district visiting nursing. During the war, Hadassah was called on also to send a trained nurse to the refugees' encampment in Alexandria.

Conditions in Palestine have always been peculiar in that most of the welfare activities that the country needed have been maintained by foreign agencies. During the war, many of these ceased to function. A number of hospitals were closed. To add to the distress, members of the medical profession who were not Ottoman citizens, were called to the colors of their respective countries; and Ottomans were drafted into the Turkish service. In this emergency, appeal after appeal came to the Zionist Organization of America to send a medical unit to Palestine; and when finally it became possible to do so, in the spring of 1918, Hadassah was asked to assemble the personnel and

equipment for a Unit of 43 physicians, sanitarians, dentists, nurses, etc., and to contribute toward its maintenance. The Unit reached its destination in August, 1918. Since then, it has opened non-sectarian hospitals and clinics in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tiberias, Safed; has established clinics in a number of other towns; has stationed physicians and nurses in many Jewish villages, who work in a circuit of villages; has conducted anti-malaria campaigns; has instituted the medical examination and treatment of school-children; etc. The American Red Cross had sent a medical and social service Unit to Palestine in the year 1918; but this Unit disbanded the following year. The Zionist Unit is still operating.

Through the Medical Unit, Hadassah was enabled to execute a plan long cherished; namely, the foundation of a nurses' training school in Palestine. This was desirable for more than one reason. In the first place, the Orient needs professionally trained nurses. Why always call on Europe or America to supply them? Secondly, the members of the Unit could not remain indefinitely in Palestine. Its personnel would gradually have to be replaced by men and women permanently resident in the land. Why not train Palestinian girls to take over the work of the American nurses? Thirdly, the inhabitants of this land,—still so poor in industrial opportunities because so poor in capital and enterprise,—needed work above all else; and to open a new profession to the intelligent girls of the country, was to render a service thrice blessed. One more reason: to teach Palestinian girls to work and to become economically independent, was a means of elevating the position of woman in the Orient. When the training school was first opened, a young man hung about the hospital grounds, trying to waylay his sister, a pupil nurse. He threatened to commit violence upon his own or her person, unless she would at once return home with him,—so deeply did he feel the disgrace of having a woman of his family learn to work. Fortunately, it was possible for the head nurse to convince him of his folly, and the girl remained.

The Hadassah Training School is attached to the Rothschild Hospital (110 beds) in Jerusalem, one of the hospitals under the jurisdiction of the American Zionist Medical Unit. As both the hospital and the nurses' residence are too small to accommodate all of the fifty-seven pupils, each girl receives part of her practical training at the Unit's 50 bed hospital in Safed, but all theoretical work is done, and most of the practice, in Jerusalem. The course of training lasts three years, and the studies include anatomy, materia medica, theory of nursing, dietetics, bacteriology, hygiene, lectures on internal medicine, obstetrics, pediatrics, and surgical nursing; periods of three

months each are devoted to surgical, medical, obstetrical, and dermatological practice, and to work in the children's ward and the clinics.

To qualify for admission, applicants must be at least twenty-one years of age, graduates of a "gymnasium," (i. e., a school somewhat more advanced than our high school), conversant with Hebrew. The Hebrew of the Bible, with an enlarged vocabulary to meet modern needs, is the language of intercourse and instruction. Pupils are admitted in September and May; the probationary period is six months. Hours are from seven to seven with a free period of three hours daily, one-half day a week, and extra time off for milk in the morning and tea in the afternoon, necessitated by the poor health of the girls, many of whom suffered severely during the war. When the school first opened, the days of illness among forty pupils amounted to sixty or seventy a month; the present record is seven days' illness during one month among forty-three pupils at the same hospital. Although the superintendent of the Hadassah Training School, the graduate nurses, the head of the pupil nurses' home, are Americans, all the pupil nurses are Palestinian either by birth or adoption. They are earnest, intelligent, ambitious girls. The first class will be graduated in November, 1921. From among those who will receive diplomas, two will be awarded Hadassah scholarships and will be sent to the United States for special study in medical social service and in hospital management. These scholarships are granted in order that, within a few years Palestinian nurses may replace the American nurses in all departments of Hadassah's work.

Hadassah believes that there is no short quick cut to professional efficiency. Through insistence on a long probationary period, and three years of training in the country itself, and through the grant of stipends for postgraduate work in America, Hadassah expects to create a corps of nurses thoroughly trained in all the usual branches of the profession. Is it too much to hope that these young women will bring not only healing to sick bodies but also—in their contacts with all the peoples, races, sects of the Near East,—understanding of souls, reconciliation, interpretation of East to West, and Occident to the awakening Orient?

#### ENGLISH NEWS

HEADQUARTERS AND NURSES' CLUB OF THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION were opened on May 18 by the President, Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, accompanied by Her Highness Princess Marie Louise. On May 19 and 20 "open house" was held and visitors were conducted over the club. Although not yet officially open, a number of nurses have been in residence including two contingents of army nurses.